

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS:

The attached sheet of drawing includes a change to Fig. 5 by adding the numeral -- 3''' --, and replaces the original sheet depicting Fig. 5.

Insert New Figure 6 attached hereto.

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the above-captioned application is requested.

Claim 1 has been replaced by new claim 10, and claim 8 has been replaced by new claim 13.

A preferred embodiment of the invention relates to a tire tread having motifs 10 that are interconnected by at least two rubber connecting elements 4, 5, wherein a cavity 6 is formed which closes when in contact with roadway (either when the tire is new or after a certain period of wear).

In order to minimize noise generated by such a tread structure, the present invention involves providing at least one of the connecting elements with at least one orifice (51, 71, 72, 84) extending therethrough to communicate the cavity with a groove to enable air in the cavity to escape. Hence, a noise-generating suction effect is prevented.

New claim 10 recites that at least one of the connecting elements comprises at least one orifice, in contrast to original claim 1 which recited that the orifice could be in the motif. None of the prior art references relied upon in the Official Action suggests providing a connecting element with an orifice. In fact, none of those references even discusses the noise problem dealt with by the presently claimed invention.

Watanabe and Japan '908 disclose that a motif can have a sipe formed therein, but there is no disclosure of any connecting elements or orifices in such connecting elements as recited in claim 18. There is particularly no disclosure therein of providing orifices in communication with cavities of the type that could

otherwise produce noise. Accordingly, it will be appreciated that claim 10 distinguishes patentably over the applied prior art.

Dependent claims 11 and 12 recite the relationship between the heights of the motifs and the connecting elements.

The structure recited in claim 12 (and claim 15) is supported by original claim 8. That is, if H equals zero, then the connecting elements would extend from the running surface of the tread. The description has been amended at page 5 to provide antecedent for such language.

Dependent claim 6 further recites that a motif includes a channel. The structure of a tread provided with an orifice 51 in a connecting element and also with a channel 121 in a motif is disclosed at page 8, first paragraph of the description. New Fig. 6 has been inserted to depict that disclosed embodiment.

New claim 13 replaces claim 9 in that it recites a tire having the tread described in claim 1.

New claim 16 is directed to the embodiment disclosed in connection with Fig. 5, namely wherein the connecting elements 4", 5" are formed in a transverse groove, and communication of the cavity with a groove is established by a longitudinal (circumferential) channel 121 formed in a motif. The Watanabe and Japan '908 references disclose channels formed in a transverse direction within a motif in order to affect the behavior of the motif. There is no suggestion that the same affects would be created by a longitudinally (circumferentially) extending channel. Thus, there would be no motivation from either of those references to provide a motif of Matsuura with a longitudinally extending channel, and it is submitted that claim 16 distinguishes patentably over the applied prior art.

In light of the foregoing, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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